

Covid Reset and Hybrid Working

As we come out of covid lockdown, organisations are deciding on how staff are going to work and what the new normal is going to be. Unlike when lockdown first started last year, organisations now have the opportunity to manage this change and how best to implement, their way of operation

Organisations and the teams within them need to decide how they are going to operate in the future. The situation over last year has shown that organisations can operate in a different way. It will have established new strengths, that can now be incorporated into working practices in the future. It will also show where remote working doesn't work for an organisation, department and or team.

Remote working will have had different motivational impacts on individuals. For a great many, not having to do the daily commute will have been a bonus. For others the sense of isolation at home on their own will have been difficult to cope with and handle. Others will be itching to get back to the office and socialise and to have the opportunity to be away from their home environment. For many being independent and being on their own, will have been bliss and the thought of having to go back to the office and be with team members, is not something they are looking forward to.

During the past year everyone has experienced some form of change. This change has been beyond our control and therefore could at first have had a bigger impact on individuals than it would have done if it were a managed change. After a year most of us have adapted to the change, although for many it may still be something we are resistant to, and we are itching to get back to some kind of normality.

We need to remember that change is always more acceptable when:

- People see the reason for it.
- It does not affect job security.
- Those affected have helped create it.
- It arises out of application of previously established principles
- It follows a series of successful changes
- Previous changes have been assimilated
- It is planned
- People see that they will get some benefit from it.
- People have been prepared for it.

We need to ensure that we incorporate these factors as we change back to the new way of working, whether that is how things use to be or a combination of home and office working on a flexible basis.

If you are going to change to a hybrid way of working, to achieve success you need to ensure that there is:

- Gaining buy-in for the changes from those involved and affected, directly or indirectly.
- Involving the right people in the design and implementation of changes, to make sure the right changes are made.
- Assessing the impact and addressing how the changes will affect people.
- Communication and consultation are vital, informing everyone and getting feedback. Listening and where possible, adapting the change to who is affected.
- You and the team, need to be ready to adapt to the change, by ensuring you have the right information, support and help.
- How will hybrid working affect productivity and performance, is it feasible? Has the objective setting worked when remote working was implemented, what needs to change?
- How will teams come together, in what way will you conduct team meetings? Will this be remotely, a hybrid or in a physical environment. Have remote meetings worked or have you seen a drop in team cooperation and communication? Has creativity and decision making remained the same, or have you seen poorer and less effective decisions? If the answer is yes to some of these questions, you need to establish at least some physical meetings when the rules allow.
- If you are a manager, have you been able to manage the morale and motivation of the team and individuals. Where do you need to make changes so that yours and others motivation increases?
- Ask what works for you and make sure you voice and state what is important for your own state of mind and well being
- If you are going down the hybrid route, how does that work in terms of equality and diversity, is there a problem that you could be creating with two types of work force?

The essence of this is to identify the tasks that are necessary if you're going to give change the greatest chance of success This is particularly important after the dramatic changes over the past year or so.